

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Previously presented) A modular joint implant implantable within a body through an opening in skin comprising:

a plurality of separate implant portions each having a bone contacting surface and an abutting mateable side surface including polymeric material, the side surfaces bondable together within the body by the application of an energy source operative to produce heat within said polymeric material to form a unitary implant having an articulating surface;

wherein the plurality of separate implant portions are affixable to at least one joint member of a joint; and

wherein the implant portions are passable through an opening in skin that is substantially less wide than the formed unitary implant.

2. (Previously presented) The modular joint implant of claim 1, wherein the energy source includes ultrasonic energy.

3. (Previously presented) The modular joint implant of claim 1, wherein the at least one joint member is a femoral joint member of a knee joint.

4. (Previously presented) The modular joint implant of claim 3, wherein at least two of said separate implant portions include lateral and medial condyles.

5. (Previously presented) The modular joint implant of claim 4, wherein the articulating surface includes a trochlear groove configured for receiving a patella.

6. (Previously presented) The modular joint implant of claim 1, wherein the plurality of separate implant portions include first and second implant portions, and

wherein the first implant portion is a medial implant portion and the second implant portion is a lateral implant portion.

7. (Previously presented) The modular joint implant of claim 1, wherein the plurality of separate implant portions include first and second implant portions, and

wherein the first implant portion is an anterior implant portion and the second implant portion is a posterior implant portion.

8. (Original) The modular joint implant of claim 1, wherein the joint is selected from a group consisting of a shoulder joint, an elbow joint, a wrist joint, a hip joint, a knee joint, and an ankle joint.

9. (Original) The modular joint implant of claim 8, wherein the plurality of separate implant portions are made from a material selected from the group consisting of a polymer, a metal, a metal alloy, and a combination thereof.

10. (Previously presented) The modular joint implant of claim 1, wherein the plurality of separate implant portions are affixed together prior to affixing to the at least one joint member.

11. (Previously presented) The modular joint implant of claim 1, wherein the plurality of separate implant portions are affixed together after affixing to the at least one joint member.

12. (Previously presented) The modular joint implant of claim 1, wherein the plurality of separate implant portions are affixed together during affixing to the at least one joint member.

13. (Previously presented) A modular joint implant implantable within a body through an opening in skin, comprising:

a plurality of separate implant portions each having a bone contacting surface, and at least one abutting mateable side surface including polymeric material, the side surfaces bondable together within the body by the application of an energy source operative to produce heat within said polymeric material to form a unitary implant, one of said separate implant portions replacing at least a portion of a medial side of the body joint, and another of said separate implant portions replacing at least a portion of a lateral side of the body joint, thereby forming an articulating surface comprising at least separate medial and lateral implant portions,

wherein the plurality of separate implant portions are affixable to at least one joint member; and

wherein the implant portions are passable through an opening in skin that is substantially less wide than the formed unitary implant.

14. (Original) The modular joint implant of claim 13, wherein the at least one joint member is a femoral joint member.

15. (Previously presented) The modular joint implant of claim 14, wherein the separate medial and lateral implant portions comprise lateral and medial condyles.

16. (Previously presented) The modular joint implant of claim 14, wherein at least one of said separate implant portions comprises a trochlear groove configured for receiving a patella.

17. (Previously presented) The modular joint implant of claim 13, wherein the plurality of separate implant portions include polymeric material and are affixable one to the other by the application of an energy source operative upon said polymeric material .

18. (Original) The modular joint implant of claim 13, wherein at least one of the plurality of separate implant portions includes a layer of a polymer and a layer of a metallic material.

19. (Previously presented) The modular joint implant of claim 13, wherein the plurality of separate implant portions are mechanically affixed together.

20. (Previously presented) The modular joint implant of claim 17, wherein said energy source is ultrasonic energy.

21. (Previously presented) A modular femoral joint implant implantable within a body comprising:

first and second implant portions passed separately through an opening in the skin of the body, each having a bone contacting surface, and at least one abutting mateable side surface including polymeric material, the side surfaces bondable together within the body by the application of an energy source operative to produce heat within said polymeric material to form a unitary implant affixable to a femoral joint member of a knee joint; and

wherein the implant portions are passable through an opening in skin that is substantially less wide than the formed unitary implant.

22. (Previously presented) A method of replacing a portion of a joint, in a body, with a modular joint implant, comprising the steps of:

providing the modular joint implant as a plurality of separate implant portions each having a bone contacting surface and an abutting mateable side surface including polymeric material, the side surfaces bondable together in the body to form a unitary implant having an articulating surface;

preparing the joint member to receive the modular joint implant;

sequentially positioning the plurality of separate implant portions on the prepared bone of the joint member; and

affixing the separate implant portions together by the application of an energy source operative to produce heat within the polymeric material;

wherein said step of preparing may include forming an opening in skin that is substantially less wide than the formed unitary implant.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, further comprising making at least one incision in body tissue proximal the joint, wherein the at least one incision has a width less than a width of the modular joint implant.

24. (Previously presented) The method of claim 23, wherein said fastener comprises an inner member associated with a first implant portion, and an outer member associated with a second implant portion, wherein said inner and outer members are pressed into matable engagement with each other, overcoming an initial resistive force, whereby said first and second implant portions are mechanically affixed one to the other.

25-31. (Canceled)

32. (Previously presented) A method for replacing a portion of a joint in a body, in a minimally invasive surgical procedure, comprising the steps of:

forming a plurality of separate joint replacement portions, each having a bone contacting surface and an abutting mateable side surface, at least the abutting surface including polymeric material; and,

providing said plurality of separate implant portions, to be passed separately into the body, wherein said abutting surface of at least two of said separate implant portions are abutted and bonded together in the body through the application of ultrasonic energy operative to produce heat within the polymeric material to form a unitary implant.

33. (Previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the joint is a knee, and wherein at least one of said separate joint replacement portions is operative to replace at least a portion of a medial condyle, and another of said separate joint replacement portions is operative to replace at least a portion of a lateral condyle.

34. (Previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the joint is selected from the group consisting of finger, wrist, elbow, shoulder, spine, hip, knee, ankle, and toe.

35. (Previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein said separate joint implant portions are passed into the body from a side of the joint, the side being one of the medial and lateral side of the joint.

36. (Previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the joint is one of a spinal facet and a spinal disc.

37. (Previously presented) The method of claim 32, further comprising the step of providing means for affixing said abutted and connected portions to the body.

38. (Previously presented) The joint implant of claim 1, wherein the joint implant is implantable within the knee, and wherein at least one of said separate implant portions is operative to replace at least a portion of a single condyle, and another of said separate implant portions is operative to replace at least a portion of a trochlear area.

39. (Previously presented) The joint implant of claim 21, wherein said first and second implant portions are implanted while the lower portion of the leg of the patient is suspended from the upper portion of the leg.